

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1487

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LILONGWE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

UNCLAS PRETORIA 3571

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MOPS, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: TWELVE WHITES KILLED AT MISSION SCHOOL

SUMMARY: TWELVE WHITES WERE KILLED BY QUERRILLAS, ALLEGEDLY BY ZANU, AT A MISSION STATION. SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA ARE GIVING THE INCIDENT HEAVY PLAN. PIK BOTHA WAS QUOTED AS SAYING NEGOTIATING WITH SUCH PEOPLE AS THESE TERRORISTS IS OUT OF HIS MIND." RHODESIAN REACTIONS ARE SIMILAR EXCEPT NEITHER THE RHODESIAN FRONT NOR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL HAVE COMMENTED. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS HERE, ON THE EVENING OF JUNE 23, AT LEAST EIGHT GUERRILLAS ENTERED THE ELIM PENTECOSTAL MISSION STATION IN THE VAMBU MOUNTAINS, JUST SOUTH OF UMTALI, AND PROCEEDED TO ROB THE SCHOOL, GATHER THE 250 STUDENTS AND LECTURE THEM, AND MASSACRE SEVEN WHITE STAFF MEMBERS AND THEIR FIVE CHILDREN. TWO WHITE
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STAFF MEMBERS SURVIVED. THE KILLING OF THE TWELVE WHITES WAS PARTICULARLY BRUTAL. RHODESIAN ACCOUNTS HAVE BLAMED MAGABE'S ZANU FORCES.

2. THE INCIDENT HAS BEEN GIVEN VERY HEAVY MEDIA PLAN IN SOUTH AFRICA. THE PRO-SAG" CITIZEN" RAN GRUESOME FRONT PAGE COLOR PHOTOS OF THE MASSACRE, "THE ONLY

JUSTIFICATION (FOR WHICH TO)... GRAPHICALLY DEMONSTRATE THE SAVAGERY OF THE TERRORISTS." THIS SAME PAPER EDITORIALIZED THAT "THESE ARE THE TERRORISTS WHOM MEN LIKE ANDY YOUNG SUPPORT." OTHER EDITORIAL COMMENT CALLED FOR WORLD CONDEMNATION OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT AND ZANU, IF THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE. THE "RAND DAILY MAIL" SAID THAT IT IS PRECISELY OMISSION FROM THE SETTLEMENT SCHEME THAT ALLOWED SUCH A MASSACRE, BUT THAT IT IS INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO EQUATE A "REPUGNANCE OF INHUMANITY WITH THE REALITY OF THE FRONT'S EXISTENCE." THE MAJOR SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK-RUN DAILY, "THE POST", HAS GIVEN LITTLE ATTENTION TO THE INCIDENT AND MADE NO COMMENT.

3. SAG REACTION HAS SO FAR BEEN LIMITED TO A STATEMENT ISSUED BY FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA IN CAPE TOWN IN WHICH HE SAID, "I THINK THESE ATROCITIES COMMITTED IN AN ATTEMPT TO SABOTAGE MOVES FOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA, AND WHICH AMOUNTS TO ABHORRENT AND SENSELESS KILLING OF INNOCENT PEOPLE AND CHILDREN OUGHT TO SHAKE THE WORLD. BOTHA ADDED THAT THE MATTER WAS SO REPULSIVE THAT ANYBODY WHO THOUGHT THEY COULD NEGOTIATE WITH PEOPLE COMMITTING SUCH ACTS "MUST BE OUT OF THEIR MINDS."

4. RHODESIAN REACTIONS REPORTED HERE INCLUDE STATEMENTS BY INTERNAL LEADERS CHIRAU AND MUZOREWA. CHIRAU REPORTEDLY UNCLASSIFIED

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SAID THIS WAS THE "TRAGIC ACTIVITY OF COWARDS AND CRIMINALS. THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT FREEDOM FIGHTERS.... IF THEY WANT TO FIGHT, WHY DON'T THEY FIGHT LIKE MEN AND FIGHT THE ARMY." MUZOREWA WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "ATROCITIES AGAINST CHILDREN AND DEFENSELESS PEOPLE, WHETHER THEY ARE BLACK OR WHITE, SHOULD BE DEPLORED. THERE WAS NO PURPOSE IN TAKING THE LIVES OF INNOCENT PEOPLE." OPPOSITION PARTY LEADER NICK MCNALLY IS QUOTED AS SAYING THE INCIDENT "IS QUITE TERRIBLE... I AM QUITE HORRIFIED." THE CATHOLIC JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION TERMED THE INCIDENT "PAST EXPLANATION AND UNDERSTANDING." THE RHODESIAN "SUNDAY MAIL" EDITORIALIZED THAT THESE WERE "MURDERS OF THE WORST KIND IMAGINABLE. WE WONDER WHAT PRESIDENT CARTER, MR CALLAGHAN, DR. OWEN, MR. YOUNG AND THEIR ILK HAVE TO SAY NOW. WE CAN GUESS-PIOUS PLATITUDES, ABOUT DEPLORING MURDER, ETC., BUT DOING PRECIOUS LIKKTE CONSTRUCTIVE TO END IT ALL." THERE HAS BEEN NO RHODESIAN FRONT OR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL STATEMENT YET.

5. OTHER REACTIONS REPORTED HERE INCLUDE BYRON HOVE, FORMER RHODESIAN JUSTICE MINISTER, SAYING IN LONDON

THAT "THERE ARE WORSE ATROCITIES HAPPENING.THE DIFFERENCE...
IS THAT THESE HAVE BEEN REPORTED BECAUSE IT INVOLVES--
SHALL I PUT IT QUITE FRANKLY -- WHITE PEOPLE AND FOR THAT
MATTER BRITISH CITIZENS." LOCAL PRESS REPORTS THE "AMBIA
SUNDAY TIMES" AS CONDEMNING THE "MINDLESS SLAUGHTER."
"IF FREEDOM FIGHTERS WERE RESPONSIBLE," THE PAPER
SAID, "THEN THE PATRIOTIC FRONT SHOULD PUT THEM ON
TRIAL AT A COURT MARTIAL." ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, REPORTS,
THE ELIM PENTACOSTAL CHURCH IS REPORTED TO HAVE
DECIDED TO CLOSE THE VAMBU MISSION.
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